BIDEFORD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

and the

SURVEYOR, ENGINEER AND SANITARY INSPECTOR

for the year

1955

BIDEFORD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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A N N U A L R E P O R T

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PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

Medical Officer of Health:

Dr. N. Bowring Betts, F.R.C.S.

Surveyor, Engineer and Sanitary Inspector:

Mr. L. J. Dunn, A.M.S.E., A.M.I.P.H.E., A.I.A.S.,

Technical Assistant:

Mr. J. W. Whitefield

Clerk:

Miss A. Giddy

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STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area (Acres)	55,770
Population (Estimated)	5,300
Number of separately rated hereditaments as at 1st April, 1956	1,887
Rateable Value (as at 31.3.56)	32,898
Sum represented by a Penny Rate (as at 31.3.56)	85/14/8.330

The chief occupations of the inhabitants of the District are directly or indirectly associated with agriculture. The District is a very popular holiday centre and many hotels, boarding houses and farms specialise in seasonal catering.

1955

A N N U A L R E P O R T

of the Medical Officer of Health for the

Bideford Rural District

Cleverdon House,

Bradworthy

August, 1956.

Mr. Chairman, Lady and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you my Report dealing with the Public Health and general conditions of the district during the year 1955.

Your obedient Servant,

N. Bowring Betts,

Medical Officer of Health.

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VITAL STATISTICS

BIRTHS	1955
Live Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	15.0
Live Birth Rate per 1,000 for England and Wales	16.2
Still Birth Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) Births	36.1
DEATHS	
Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	7.4
Corrected Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	12.0
Death Rate per 1,000 for England and Wales	15.4

DEATHS FROM PUERPERAL CAUSES

	Deaths 1955	Rate per 1,000 (Live and Still Births) 1955
Puerperal Sepsis	0	0
Other Puerperal Causes ..	0	0
Total	0	0

DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE	1955
Legitimate	1
Illegitimate	0
Total	1

DEATH RATE	
All Infants per 1,000 live births	12.5
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	12.5
All Infants per 1,000 live births (England and Wales)	28.4
Deaths from Cancer (All ages)	7
Deaths from Measles (All ages)	0
Deaths from Whooping Cough (All ages)	0
Deaths from Diarrhoea (Under 2 years)	0

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA
HOSPITALS

1. TUBERCULOSIS

There are no hospitals for the reception of tuberculous patients in this district. Advanced cases are usually treated at Hawley Sanatorium, Barnstaple. Convalescent patients from this district are sometimes sent to the Devon County Council's large and well equipped sanatorium at Hawkmoor, South Devon.

2. ISOLATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Any cases of infectious diseases which cannot be isolated or properly cared for at home, are conveyed to the North Devon Joint Isolation Hospital, which comprises 30 beds, 4 cots and 8 observation cubicles. During 1955 4 cases were admitted to the Isolation Hospital from the Bideford Rural District.

3. SMALLPOX

The Smallpox Hospital of the Devon County Council provides treatment for any case of smallpox that may arise in this district.

4. GENERAL

The Bideford and District Hospital serves the district extremely well for General Medical and Surgical treatment. The hospital contains about 51 beds. Hospital facilities are also available at the North Devon Infirmary, Barnstaple, and the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, Exeter.

5. MATERNITY CASES

Maternity cases may be admitted to the North Devon Infirmary, Barnstaple and also, by arrangement with the Devon County Council, to the Grenville Nursing Home, Bideford.

6. DISTRICT NURSING

There are six District Nurses, all qualified midwives, working in the district.

7. LABORATORY FACILITIES

Bacteriological examinations are undertaken by the Public Health Laboratory Service at 7 Dix's Field, Exeter, the Director is Dr. Moore.

Chemical analyses are carried out by Public Analysts, Messrs. Tickle & Reynolds, of Queen Street, Exeter.

8. DISINFECTION OF INFECTED BEDDING AND CLOTHING

By arrangement with the Bideford and District Joint Isolation Hospital Board, any infected bedding and clothing can be disinfected in the steam disinfecting apparatus at the Isolation Hospital.

9. AMBULANCE FACILITIES

There is a St. John Ambulance stationed at Bideford, which serves the rural district. There is also a separate ambulance stationed at the Isolation Hospital, which is used for the conveyance of patients suffering from any of the notifiable infectious diseases.

10. ANTE-NATAL CLINICS

An ante-natal clinic is held at Bideford.

11. CHILD WELFARE CLINICS

There are Child Welfare Clinics held at Hartland and Bideford.

12. VENEREAL DISEASE

A Clinic for venereal disease is held at the North Devon Infirmary twice weekly.

13. ORTHOPAEDIC CLINIC

A Clinic is held twice a month at Barnstaple and Bideford Hospital.

14. BIRTH CONTROL CLINIC

A Clinic is held once a month at the North Devon Dispensary, Barnstaple.

PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES
NOTIFICATIONS

Diseases	Total number of cases notified	Cases admitted to hospital	Total deaths
Scarlet Fever	2	1	0
Diphtheria..	0	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	0	0	0
Pneumonia	4	2	3
Dysentery	0	0	0
Erysipelas..	0	0	0
Opthalmia Neonatorum.. ..	0	0	0
Anterior Poliomyelitis ..	1	1	0
and Polioencephalitis ..	0	0	0
Measles	4	0	0
Whooping Cough	0	0	0
Acute Encephalitis Lethargica	0	0	0
Cerebro Spinal Meningitis	0	0	0

AGE INCIDENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

	Scarlet Fever		Whooping Cough		Acute Polio. Paralytic		Acute Polio. Non-Paralytic	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Under 1 year	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1-2 years	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
3-4 "	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5-9 "	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
10-14 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15-24 "	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25 & over	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0

	Acute Pneumonia		Measles	
	M	F	M	F
Under 1 year	0	0	0	0
1-2 years	0	0	0	0
3-4 "	0	0	0	0
5-9 "	0	0	0	4
10-14 "	0	1	0	0
15-24 "	0	0	0	0
25 & over	1	2	0	0
	1	3	0	4

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

A high proportion of the children under 15 years of age have availed themselves of the above scheme. Each school in the district has been visited by the School Medical Officer for this purpose.

TUBERCULOSIS

The number of cases of Tuberculosis remaining on the register was as follows:-

		31st Dec. 1955
(a) Pulmonary	Males	9
	Females	7
(b) Non-Pulmonary ..	Males	6
	Females	2

Total Cases on the Register, December 31st, 1955	24
" " " " " " " 1954	23
" " " " " " " 1953	27
" " " " " " " 1952	26
" " " " " " " 1951	24
" " " " " " " 1950	23
" " " " " " " 1949	21
" " " " " " " 1948	24
" " " " " " " 1947	22
" " " " " " " 1946	21
" " " " " " " 1945	16
" " " " " " " 1944	21
" " " " " " " 1943	23
" " " " " " " 1942	18
" " " " " " " 1941	17
" " " " " " " 1940	19
" " " " " " " 1939	18

TUBERCULOSIS
(Contd.)

1. NEW CASES

During the year 3 cases were notified in accordance with the Regulations.

(a) Pulmonary	Males	1
	Females	1
(b) Non-Pulmonary	Males	1
	Females	0

The following are the notifications for the preceding eleven years:-

	Pulmonary	Non-Pulmonary	Total
1954	2	1	3
1953	0	1	1
1952	1	0	1
1951	1	0	1
1950	2	0	2
1949	1	1	2
1948	0	4	4
1947	2	1	3
1946	3	2	5
1945	2	0	2
1944	4	0	4

2. AGE PERIODS (NEW CASES)

	Pulmonary 1955		Non-Pulmonary 1955	
	M	F	M	F
Under 1 year	0	0	0	0
1 to 5 years	0	0	0	0
5 to 10 years	0	0	1	0
10 to 15 years	0	0	0	0
15 to 25 years	0	0	0	0
25 to 35 years	1	0	0	0
35 to 45 years	0	1	0	0
45 to 55 years	0	0	0	0
55 to 65 years	0	0	0	0
65 and over	0	0	0	0

MORTALITY FROM TUBERCULOSIS

TOTAL DEATHS, 1955 Nil.

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

CAUSES OF DEATH	1955 M	1955 F
Tuberculosis, Respiratory	0	0
Other Tuberculosis diseases	0	0
Syphilitic disease	0	0
Diphtheria	0	0
Whooping Cough	0	0
Meningococcal Infections	0	0
Acute Poliomyelitis	0	0
Measles	0	0
Other Infective and Parasitic diseases	0	0
Malignant Neoplasm Stomach	0	0
Malignant Neoplasm Lung, Bronchus	1	0
Malignant Neoplasm Breast	0	1
Malignant Neoplasm Uterus	0	0
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasm	0	5
Leukaemia, Aleukaemia	0	0
Diabetes	0	0
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	6	5
Coronary Disease, Angina	6	2
Hypertension with Heart Disease	1	3
Other Heart Disease	4	8
Other Circulatory Disease	1	3
Influenza	0	0
Pneumonia	0	3
Bronchitis	0	1
Other diseases of Respiratory System	0	0
Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum	1	0
Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	0	0
Nephritis and Nephrosis	0	0
Hyperplasia of Prostate	0	0
Pregnancy, Childbirth, Abortion	0	0
Congenital Malformations	0	0
Other Defined and Ill-Defined diseases	4	4
Motor vehicle accidents	1	0
All other accidents	2	0
Suicide	1	1
Homicide and Operations of War	0	0
Total - All Causes	28	36

A N N U A L R E P O R T

OF THE SURVEYOR, ENGINEER AND SANITARY INSPECTOR

FOR THE BIDEFORD RURAL DISTRICT

Grenville House,
The Quay,
Bideford.

August, 1956.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
BIDEFORD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Mr. Chairman, Lady and Gentlemen,

I beg to present my Annual Report for the year 1955, dealing with matters which come within the purview of this Department.

It is very gratifying to be able to report a very different story with regard to the water supply situation in the district, occasioned by the activities of the North Devon Water Board, who have, at long last, brought mains water supply to certain villages in the district from the trunk mains and main supply at Prewley, Dartmoor.

The position has greatly improved in the Parishes of Buckland Brewer, Parkham and Monkleigh, and this is the commencement to the many miles of water mains which are to be laid throughout the district to relieve the very serious water shortage which occurs annually, since to date practically the whole of the district has had to rely on shallow wells which after a few weeks of true summer weather either dry up, or in which the flow is reduced to such an extent that water can be used for absolute essentials only.

The Council's programme in the field of sewerage and sewage disposal is proceeding satisfactorily, and the policy formulated some years ago of carrying out one scheme for a village each year as main water reaches the area, is proving most satisfactory in many ways, and whereas the advent of main water supply increases drainage difficulties if the sewer is not available, this danger to public health has not arisen in the district.

In the field of housing, the urgent need for houses, which was very apparent at the end of the war and for a few years thereafter, is no longer felt in the district, and further the housing programme, which in any case was slowing up because of the lack of urgent cases requiring re-housing, has received a setback by the continuous policy of increasing loan charges on money borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board to finance building, which resulted in increasingly higher rents to cover the costs, not only of increased building costs, but the higher rate of interest.

During the year plans were made to build a number of houses at Welcombe, Clovelly and Monkleigh, but for the reasons stated above, two houses only were built at Welcombe, and plans and specifications are held in readiness in the office to go to tender within a short time should the Council so decide, for six bungalows at Higher Clovelly, and four bungalows and four houses at Monkleigh, and plans were prepared and approved for the layout of an additional nine houses and bungalows at the Monkleigh Estate.

The emphasis has been changed, in accordance with Government policy, from the provision of new houses to the support of schemes by private property owners to re-condition houses, which were quickly falling into a state of disrepair to such an extent that to condemn them within a few years was the only action which could be taken - reference to this matter is made later in the report.

It is to be regretted that as yet, because of the continued need for financial restriction, it has not been possible to review the refuse collection programme in the district, which although being carried on reasonably satisfactorily, could be greatly improved, and it is suggested that this is one aspect of the Council's activity which should receive urgent consideration.

The remainder of the Report follows its customary form, giving details, in statistical form and otherwise, of all the various aspects and responsibilities of the Department, existing services and intimating how these are to be improved.

I wish to thank the Members of the Council for their assistance generally in my duties, and more particularly for their help when dealing with certain local matters when the assistance of someone with local knowledge is of prime importance, and the staff of the Department for their support and co-operation.

I am, Mr. Chairman, Lady & Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

L. J. Dunn

Surveyor.

HOUSING

The following table enumerates the number of houses owned by the Council in the various Parishes and whether pre-war, war-time or post-war houses:-

Pre-war Houses

Abbotsham	2
Alwington	4
Buckland Brewer	2
Clovelly	2
Hartland	4
Littleham	2
Monkleigh	2
Parkham	6
Woolsery	2
Total	26

War-time Houses

In 1944 the Council built four houses:-

Natcott, Hartland	2
Crosspark, Woolsery	2
Total	4

Post-war Houses

Abbotsham	6
Alwington	6
Buckland Brewer	12
Bulkworthy	2
Clovelly	8
East Putford	2
Hartland	32
Littleham	4
Monkleigh	12
Parkham	6
Welcombe	2
Total	92

HOUSING ACTS, 1936/54

A number of applications for grants towards the cost of conversion and/or improvement works on properties were received during the year, and grants involving payment of £3,200 were approved for eight properties.

A number of applications received during the year were subsequently approved by the Council for grants, and others were withdrawn for various reasons.

One of these applications included a proposal for conversion of one large farmhouse into two houses, and the remainder were for improvement only.

Those schemes carried out with the aid of improvement grants, completed to date, have proved to be very satisfactory indeed, and

have in many cases resulted in old houses, which were in a very bad state of repair, being improved to a standard equivalent to any modern Council house, with the result that they will give satisfactory housing accommodation for a number of years to come. This has improved the general situation in the district in two ways; it has removed the necessity for the provision of Council houses to replace those houses which have fallen into disrepair and are subsequently condemned, and some cottages which were most unsightly in certain villages and hamlets, now after improvement conform to the village plan and amenities very satisfactorily indeed.

The future use of the four houses which had fallen into a bad state of repair was considered by the Council during the year, and the result in all four cases has been that an undertaking has been given by the owner of the property under Section 11(3) of the Housing Act, 1936, to the effect that the house will not be used for human habitation until such time as it has been rendered fit in all respects for the purpose, and in these cases the owners have expressed their intention of carrying out major works of improvement and alteration to these houses, possibly with the aid of a grant under the Housing Acts.

WATER SUPPLIES

PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIES

The undermentioned villages in the district are served with piped water supplies:-

Abbotsham	Water obtained from the mains of the Northam Urban District Council, which reservoir is situated at Melbury in the Parish of Parkham.
Buckland Brewer	The village and part of the Parish is supplied from the North Devon Water Board mains, and the emergency scheme from standpipes in the village is to be discontinued.
Lower Clovelly	A separate scheme is available to serve this village, which has been improved in recent years by the North Devon Water Board.
Higher Clovelly	Water is available from the Burford water supply scheme - to be augmented later from the mains of the Water Board from Dartmoor.
Monkleigh	Mains of the North Devon Water Board have reached this village and the hamlet of Saltrens during the year under review - two villages where the lack of water in past years has been very acute.
Hartland	The wartime emergency water supply scheme is still in operation for the town, augmented from the Burford supply at Clovelly - although short in the height of summer, it has nevertheless given a reasonable supply, but this will, of course, be augmented when the service reservoir at Higher Clovelly is connected to the mains from Dartmoor.
Parkham	The village and parts of the eastern portion of the Parish, are served by mains of the North Devon Water Board.

The villages of Littleham, Woolsery and the hamlets of Bucks Cross, Bucks Mills, Stoke, Ford, Fairy Cross, Bulkworthy, and Newton St. Petrock still lack adequate water supply, but some of these localities are to be provided shortly with the supplies needed, and others will be the subject of further extensions from trunk and branch mains at a later date.

FARM WATER SUPPLIES

A number of farms in the district recently have benefited by improved water supply through schemes carried out under the farm water supply proposals of the Devon Agricultural Committee.

In a number of cases the farm water supply which was the subject of a grant for taking water to the farm buildings in connection with the milk supply, etc., has been extended to the dwellinghouse, and in this connection a number of schemes have been approved by this Department for further extension of the water supply scheme for domestic purposes.

WATER SAMPLES

Fifteen samples of water were taken for bacteriological and/or chemical examination from all sources during the year, and where unsatisfactory results were reported, advice was given regarding means to be adopted to sterilise the water as a temporary measure prior to permanent steps being taken to exclude the source of contamination, or an alternative supply being brought into use.

Details of samples taken and the results are given hereunder:-

Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
8	7

The figures given above, being results of water samples taken from various sources, are again indicative of the need for adequate and pure water supplies in the remainder of the district.

SEWERAGE

The undermentioned villages in the district are wholly or partially served by a sewerage scheme:-

Abbotsham
Buckland Brewer
Lower Clovelly
Horns Cross
Hartland
Parkham
Woolsery
Saltrens

During the year under review a sewerage scheme has been provided to serve the hamlet of Saltrens, where conditions were most unsatisfactory, and the scheme was finished just before the mains of the Water Board reached the village, which proved most satisfactory.

Sewerage schemes for Higher Clovelly and Monkleigh were before the Ministry of Housing and Local Government at the end of the year under review, and at the moment the position is that the Monkleigh scheme is proceeding, whereas the scheme at Higher Clovelly has been delayed because of the recent monetary "credit squeeze" applied by the Government. It is hoped, however, that this scheme will proceed in the very near future.

It is the intention of the Council to provide sewerage schemes to the undermentioned villages and hamlets, but the order in which these will be carried out is dependent on the proposed extensions of the Water Board mains:-

Ford
Fairy Cross
Bucks Mills
Littleham
Stoke

The conditions of the sewers and the sewage disposal works at Hartland have given much trouble during the year under review - the old sewers and disposal works are wholly unsatisfactory to serve the town, and at the time of writing the report a new sewerage scheme is in process of preparation, with a new sewage disposal works and new sewers to serve the existing town and the immediate development around it.

PUBLIC CLEANSING

Refuse collection is carried out by contract in the undermentioned Parishes and Villages:-

Abbotsham Parish	Bi-monthly
Alwington "	"
Parkham "	"
Woolsery "	"
Littleham "	"
Landcross "	"
Monkleigh "	"
Buckland Brewer Parish	"
Clovelly Village	Twice weekly
Higher Clovelly	Monthly
Hartland Town	Weekly
Stoke "	Monthly

FOOD PREMISES

Inspections were made of properties from which food and ice cream are sold, or in which ice cream is manufactured, and these inspections have not resulted in the necessity for reporting any serious breaches of Food Hygiene Regulations to the Council.

During the year a new Food & Drugs Act has been passed, and new Food Hygiene Regulations have been made thereunder, and these call for a higher standard of hygiene generally in food shops, and this matter has been, and is still receiving the active consideration of the Department.

One property is registered for the manufacture of ice cream, and nine properties are registered for the sale of pre-packed ice cream, which is delivered in that state from the manufacturers, and similarly sold to the public.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES

During the year two private slaughter houses were licensed by the Council after works had been carried out to them to bring them up to a reasonably satisfactory state, and they are used weekly, but only for very limited output.

Inspection of animals slaughtered has been nearly one hundred per cent., but this is possible only because of limited use, and the fact that only two premises are licensed, and details of work carried on at such premises, and details of inspections, etc. are given hereunder:-

Carcases Inspected and Condemned

	Cattle, Excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed (if known) ..	14	1	2	24	42
Number inspected	14	1	2	16	38
All diseases except Tuberculosis: Whole carcases condemned	-	-	-	-	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	6	-	-	7	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis	42%	-	-	44%	-
Tuberculosis only: Whole carcases condemned	-	-	-	-	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	3	-	-	-	3
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	21%	-	-	-	7%

MILK AND DAIRIES ACT, 1949

There is one non-producer retailer of milk registered in the district.

The majority of milk from this dairy is sold in the Borough of Bideford where samples of milk are taken from time to time.

The sale of milk by one non designated producer/retailer of milk in the district was temporarily stopped following the results of an examination of sample of milk which proved the presence of Tubicle Bacilli in the supply.

After some days the diseased animal was removed from the herd and dealt with under the Tuberculosis Order, 1938.

PLANS

Herewith are details of plans submitted to the Council for consideration under the Building Byelaws and the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947.

BUILDING BYELAWS

Number approved unconditionally 20
Number approved conditionally 13

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT, 1947

Number approved unconditionally 17
Number approved conditionally 43
Number refused 9

FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 and 1948

Prescribed particulars on the administration of the Factories Act, 1947

1. INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health.

Premises (1)	Number on Register (3)	Number of		
		Inspections (4)	Written Notices (5)	Occupiers Prosecuted (6)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities.	2	7	-	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority.	11	25	-	-
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises)	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	13	32	-	-

2. CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

Particulars (1)	Number of cases in which defects were found				No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted (7)
	Found (3)	Remedied (4)	Referred to H.M. Inspector (5)	Referred By H.M. Inspector (6)	
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7) (a) Insufficient	-	-	-	-	-
(b) Unsuitable or defective	-	-	-	-	-